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Contact: Office of Justice Programs
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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AWARDS \$11 MILLION TO CALIFORNIA FOR PRESIDENT'S DNA INITIATIVE AND CRIME-SOLVING FORENSIC SERVICES

SACRAMENTO, CA - Sarah V. Hart, Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research, development, and evaluation agency of the Justice Department, announced today that the Justice Department has awarded \$9.9 million in DNA grants throughout California to solve crime and exonerate the innocent as part of President Bush's DNA initiative, *Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology*. These are the first grants to be awarded under the President's initiative, a five-year, more than \$1 billion effort to eliminate casework and the convicted offender backlog; improve crime lab capacity; provide DNA training; provide for post-conviction DNA testing; and conduct testing to identify missing persons. An additional \$1.2 million is being awarded in California to improve criminal justice forensic services. NIJ Director Hart made this announcement at the Sacramento County District Attorney Forensic Laboratory.

"DNA promises to be the most remarkable crime-fighting tool of the 21st century," said Director Hart. "These Justice Department funds will help California maximize the use of this technology to solve crime and protect the public from serious offenders. At the same time, it will exonerate innocent suspects before they are ever charged or convicted of a crime. The Justice Department is committed to helping California enhance its forensic programs, reduce the DNA backlog and solve cold cases, such as murders and rapes."

Director Hart also commended the California Justice Department's "Cold Hit" program, which uses DNA technology. In August 2004, a man from Riverside County was the first defendant to stand trial after being identified through Cold Hit. He was convicted for the 1997 rape, robbery, and kidnapping of a 17-year-old girl. A DNA sample obtained from a physical examination after the rape matched the DNA profile of the perpetrator of two rapes. He had been released from prison shortly before the 1997 rape. More information about DNA technology is available at www.dna.gov.

Today, the NIJ Director announced the following grants for California:

Total FY 2004 DNA Initiative Funding Awarded: \$9,870,613

City of Los Angeles:	\$669,707.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog) \$527,799.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement)
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Alameda County Sheriff's Office:	\$123,815.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$147,357.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
Orange County Office of the District Attorney:	\$226,674.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$173,440.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
San Diego County:	\$151,953.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$180,847.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
Contra Costa County:	\$139,068.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$165,510.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
San Francisco City/County Police Department:	\$120,285.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$143,156.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department:	\$562,217.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$710,669 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
California Department of Justice:	\$1,318,613.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$1,065,583.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
County of Ventura:	\$48,798.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$58,075.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
Kern County District Attorney:	\$81,445.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$96,929.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
San Mateo County:	\$52,372.00 DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$62,326.00 DNA forensic casework backlog)
Oakland Police Department:	\$82,727.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$98,344.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
Fresno County Sheriff Department:	\$139,584.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$166,125.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
County of San Bernardino:	\$201,238.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$239,504.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
Sacramento County District Attorney Office:	\$191,474.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$227,883.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
City of San Diego:	\$137, 581.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$155,697.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)
County of Santa Clara:	\$127,316.00 (DNA laboratory capacity enhancement) \$144,081.00 (DNA forensic casework backlog)

University of California: \$310,798.00 (DNA Research & Development)

Regents of the University of California: \$821,623.00 (DNA Research & Development)

Other FY 2004 Forensics Grants Awarded: \$1,225,213

Sacramento County District Attorney:	-more- \$36,053.00 (general forensics research and development)
California Department of Justice:	\$128,802.00 (general forensics research and development)
California Office of Homeland Security - Office of Emergency Services:	\$810,820.00 (Coverdell formula grant)
County of Ventura:	\$80,233.00 (Coverdell discretionary grant)
Orange County Office of the District Attorney:	\$80,233.00 (Coverdell discretionary grant)
California Office of Homeland Security - Office of Emergency Services:	\$89,072.00 (Coverdell formula grant)

Total FY 2004 DNA and Forensics Grants: \$11,095,826

Throughout the country there is a large backlog of unanalyzed DNA samples, which can significantly delay criminal investigations. According to a study funded by the Justice Department, there are 542,700 DNA records waiting to be tested.

Earlier this week, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the total funding for the President's DNA initiative is nearly \$95 million. The initiative aims to reduce the DNA analysis backlog and allow law enforcement agencies to use DNA evidence promptly as a routine law enforcement tool. The Justice Department has awarded the grants directly to the local jurisdictions, which usually have the greatest DNA backlog. The grants will be administered by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research, development and evaluation component of the Justice Department.

NIJ awarded \$38 million for DNA casework; \$28 million for DNA capacity building for crime lab improvement; \$4.7 million for DNA training; \$7.9 million for DNA research and development; \$1.9 million for DNA testing for missing persons; and over \$2.3 million for general forensics research and development. In addition, NIJ has made available over \$14 million for convicted offender testing, \$9.5 million for Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants, and \$42 million for crime lab improvement. This funding represents the largest amount of money provided by the Justice Department to support state and local forensic efforts.

DNA is deoxyribonucleic acid, the material of chromosomes, which identifies a person's unique genetic makeup. Databases of convicted offenders' DNA help provide law enforcement with leads in unsolved cases in which a suspect's blood, semen, saliva, or hair was left behind.

Newer DNA analysis techniques can yield results from biological evidence invisible to the naked eye, even when the evidence is contaminated. Police departments throughout the country are reexamining unsolved rape and homicide cases using advanced methods of detecting identifiable DNA. Newly processed DNA profiles are uploaded into the FBI database, CODIS, so the data can be compared with evidence in the national system. Matches are reported to law enforcement and then verified by obtaining and analyzing a second sample from the suspect.